

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

PARKS DIVISION

DIVISION ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

The Parks Division is responsible for conserving the scenic, historic, archaeological, scientific, and recreational resources of the state and providing for their use and enjoyment thereby contributing to the cultural, recreational, and economic well being of the people and their health. The Division manages all Montana State Parks and fishing access sites as well as administers grants to trail users and for local government recreation projects. The division also oversees all design and construction work for State Parks and FAS.

- State Parks: Provides for safety, maintenance, and all aspects of the operation for 54 state parks across Montana. Programs within this area include maintenance, safety, interpretation, heritage and natural resources management, design and construction, and business operations.
- Fishing Access Sites (FAS): responsible to provide access opportunities for angling, boating, and other recreation on state waterbodies, and to maintain, develop, and provide site protection for 336 sites statewide.
- Recreational Grants Program: responsible for managing and providing grants for recreation and park enhancement within local, state, and federal agencies as well as not for profits. This includes the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grants, Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) grants, Snowmobile grants, Boat-In-Lieu (BIL) grants, and Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants.

PARKS PROGRAM PRIORITIES

SERVICE – provide high quality customer service to State Park visitors, provide the strong and efficient program leadership to local Montana communities via grant programs, and provide sites on diverse Montana waterbodies for public angling and other recreational opportunities.

SAFETY – provide for improvements in public safety and reduced exposure to liability by improving management practices, critical incident responses and hazard reductions.

STEWARDSHIP – promote stewardship of natural, cultural and recreational resources for current and future generations.

SUSTAINABILITY – provide protection and enhance natural, cultural and historic resources within State Parks while also providing economic benefits to Montana communities and the tourism industry.

STATE PARKS

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Provided safe and enjoyable recreation opportunities at 54 parks statewide while contributing to the local economic prosperity of retail and service businesses with almost 2.0 million visits in 2010.
- Completed the "2010 Montana State Park Visitor's Survey" prepared by the Bureau of Business and Economic Research at the University of Montana. Results show:
 - Resident use of state parks up nearly 78% from 2002.
 - Total spending associated with state parks visits was more than \$289 million.
 - 1,600 industry jobs created by state parks.
 - Overall visitor satisfaction is at its highest ever at approximately 94%.
- Logged approximately 37,000 volunteer hours at state parks.
- Complete significant major maintenance and campsite renovations.
- Raised user fee revenues by 20% in last three years through improved service and products.

CHALLENGES

- Improving the park system with basic services like reservations and public safety.
- Fund balances for state parks are declining and border on critical.
- Limited ability to raise additional revenues but actively pursuing new revenue streams.
- Staffing for state parks is limited in comparison to other states and sites within this state.
- Not meeting priorities adequately in some areas of the state.

DPS

- DP #601 Restore OTO Parks Operations & Maintenance \$255,906

This request is for basic operations and maintenance for front line staff to serve visitors such as the park staff at Pictograph Cave in Billings, and Travellers Rest in Lolo, and NW Montana.

- DP #605 Restore Base Operations for State Parks \$426,560

The request restores base operations for state parks that were unspent due to conservative budget management and associated with a 5% budget cut incurred last fiscal year.



FISHING ACCESS SITES (FAS)

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

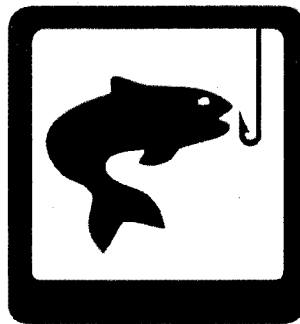
- Currently working with Burlington Northern, Mt Rail-Link, and Yellowstone Valley railroads to develop cooperative agreements that improve safety of railroad crossings adjacent to fishing access sites.
- Revised the FAS brochure and partnered with local businesses to advertise goods and services that enhance anglers experience out in the field while cutting costs for printing.
- Received two grants from the Missouri-Madison River Fund Trust for a total of approximately \$65,000 that was used for improvement of facilities at Mid-Cannon & Pelican Point FAS.
- State-wide capital improvements to FAS were made such as the installation of latrines, boat ramps and parking that were necessary to handle the increased daily use these sites.

CHALLENGES

- Demands and use of FASs are increasing due to longer recreation season, program expansion, improvements to FAS sites and landowners restricting private access to rivers, streams, and reservoirs.
- The 336 fishing access sites serve over 4 million user days each year. Staff that maintain the sites are stretched thin to keep latrines clean, fences repaired, and keep facilities well maintained.
- A backlog of maintenance issues of over \$4 million continues to be addressed statewide.

DPS

- DP #602 Restore OTO FAS Operations & Maintenance \$325,544
The request restores one-time-only FAS operations & maintenance and funds staff to cover the Madison River management program.
- DP #606 Restore FAS Base Operations \$89,636
This decision package would restore operations and maintenance for the FAS program supporting staff that do weed control, keep latrines clean, and maintain sites statewide.



RECREATION GRANTS PROGRAM

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Revised the "Off Road Montana: Summary of Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) Laws and Regulations" which is used by clubs and individuals to advise and promote safe and responsible OHV use.
- Granted \$160,000 statewide to 9 groups for OHV trails.
- Conducted the biennial Snowmobile Safety Instructors & Groomers Workshop in Dec 2010. Granted \$407,200 statewide to 25 snowmobile clubs for grooming over 4,000 miles throughout the state.
- Granted \$1,027,500 to 35 grant sponsors for the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) in FY2010.
- Established snowmobile "Simulator" to assist in safety education and outreach for youth.
- Acquired a new trail groomer for \$209,000 for the Missoula Snow Goers club.

CHALLENGES

- Due to slower economic times fuel tax revenues have been lower, which support OHV and Snowmobile programming. The division continues conservative fund management to keep programming level and stable.
- RTP & LWCF rely on federal funding sources for grants; management of federal funds is cumbersome but an important service to our communities.
- Snow groomers used by clubs get heavy use and typically 2 groomers are replaced every year with the fleet being replaced every ten years. Lower revenues for the program have only allowed the program to purchase one groomer a year.

DPS

- DP #603 Restore Snowmobile Equipment (Biennial) (\$135,380)
The request seeks to restore the biennial appropriation for purchasing snowmobile trail groomers with a budget of \$320,000.
- DP #604 Restore Grants Administration Funding \$170,000
This request supports a modified level FTE which serves as the Recreation Grants Program Bureau Chief and is critical for administering several community grants programs the Parks Division is responsible to manage.